

## Message Text

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ACTION COA-02

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 DODE-00

EB-11 FMC-04 INR-10 NSAE-00 RSC-01 CG-00 DLOS-06

PM-07 L-03 NEA-10 PA-03 PRS-01 SPC-03 USIA-15 TRSE-00

MBFR-04 SAJ-01 SS-15 NSC-10 DRC-01 /146 W

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R 241810Z SEP 73

FM AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3987

INFO AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM

USEC BRUSSELS

USOCD PARIS 523

USMISSION GENEVA

USMISSION NATO

USMISSION USUN

CINCLANT

COMICEDEFOR

NISRA/KEFLAVIK

UNCLAS REYKJAVIK 1125

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PBOR IC UK

SUBJECT: FISHERIES DISPUTE: SHIP COLLISION RELATIONS WITH BRITISH

REF: A. REYKJAVIK 1095 B. REYKJAVIK 1111

1. BEGIN SUMMARY. GOI CABINET REJECTED BRITISH PROPOSAL FOR  
INTERNATIONAL ARBITRATION OF COLLISION INCIDENTS SEPT 21.  
GOI POSITION IS THAT BLAME WILL BE ESTABLISHED BY ICELANDIC  
MARITIME COURT AND GOVT WILL MAKE DECISION ON RELATIONS WITH  
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BRITISH DEPENDING ON FINDINGS. TWO COLLISIONS TOOK PLACE SEPT

22 BETWEEN BRITISH FRIGATE AND ICELANDIC COAST GUARD CUTTER. MARITIME COURT WILL CONVENE SEPT 25 TO CONSIDER EVIDENCE END SUMMARY.

2. ALTHING FOREIGN RELATIONS COMMITTEE MET SEPT 20 AND AGREED TO RECOMMEND TO GOI THAT BRITISH PROPOSAL (REF A) PROPOSING APPOINTMENT INTERNATIONAL COMMISSION TO ESTABLISH BLAME IN SHIP COLLISIONS BE REJECTED. GOI CABINET MET SEPT 21ST AND ACCEPTED THIS ADVICE. GOI POSITION IS THAT FACTS REGARDING SHIP COLLISIONS WILL NOW BE SUBMITTED TO ICELANDIC MARITIME COURT. COURT WILL BE ASKED TO ESTABLISH BLAME. IF BLAME RESTS WITH BRITISH THEN GOI WILL PROCEED WITH PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED DECISION TO SEVER DIPLOMATIC RELATIONS WITH BRITISH.

3. DURING AFTERNOON SEPTEMBER 22 TWO COLLISIONS TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN AND THE ICELANDIC COAST GUARD CUTTER AEGIR OFF THE EAST COAST OF ICELAND. FOLLOWING IS ICELANDIC COAST GUARD COMMUNIQUE REGARDING THE INCIDENT:

"SEPTEMBER 22, 1973

"A COLLISION TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN F-99 AND THE GUNBOAT AEGIR OFF THE EASTFJORDS TODAY AT 1505 HOURS. THIS MORNING THE SHIPS HAD BEEN SAILING PARALLEL FOR OVER ONE HOUR AND THE FRIGATE HAD MADE NO ATTEMPT TO RAM THE GUNBOAT. AT 1505 HOURS TODAY THE FRIGATE SUDDENLY RAMMED THE GUNBOAT ON THE STARBOARD SIDE OF THE BOW. THE GUNBOAT SUSTAINED LITTLE DAMAGE. AT THAT TIME NO TRAWLER WAS AT A LESSER DISTANCE THAN 2.5 NAUTICAL MILES FROM THE SHIPS. THIS INCIDENT TOOK PLACE ABOUT 31 NAUTICAL MILES WITHIN THE FISHERY LIMITS OFF NORDFJARDARHORN. "AT 1600 HOURS TODAY ANOTHER COLLISION TOOK PLACE BETWEEN THE SAME SHIPS ABOUT 18 NAUTICAL MILES EAST OF NORDFJARDARHORN, I.E., ABOUT 32 NAUTICAL MILES WITHIN THE FISHERY LIMITS. THE BRITISH FRIGATE LINCOLN SAILED ALONGSIDE THE GUNBOAT ON THE STARBOARD SIDE AND TURNED SUDDENTLY TO PORT IN FRONT OF THE GUNBOAT. THE GUNBOAT SET FULL ASTERN AND TURNED AWAY THEREBY TRYING TO AVOID A COLLISION. THIS WAS UNSUCCESSFUL AND THE SHIPS COLLIDED. AS IN THE FORMER COLLISION THERE WERE 2.5 NAUTICAL MILES TO THE NEAREST TRAWLER. UNCLASSIFIED

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THE DAMAGE SUSTAINED BY THE GUNBOAT IN THE LATTER COLLISION WAS SOMEWHAT GREATER THAN IN THE FORMER. IT WAS PRIMARILY TO THE RAILING AND FOUR HULL RIBS WERE BENT CLOSE TO THE TOP OF THE BOW. THERE WAS NO INJURY TO HUMANS.

"A MARITIME COURT INQUIRY WILL BE HELD BECAUSE OF THE COLLISIONS AND AS IN EARLIER COURT INQUIRIES BECAUSE OF THE RAMMINGS BY TUGBOATS AND FRIGATES, THE BRITISH WILL BE INVITED TO SEND

DELEGATES TO THE PROCEEDINGS, BUT HITHERTO THEY HAVE SEEN NO REASON TO BE REPRESENTED THERE."

4. ACCORDING TO REPORTS EVENING SEPT 22ND PRIMIN JOHANNESSON ANNOUNCED THAT MARITIME COURT WOULD BE CONVENED ON FOLLOWING DAY. IT HAS NOW BEEN ANNOUNCED THAT COURT WILL NOT MEET UNTIL SEPT 25TH, OSTENSIBLY BECAUSE OF NEED TO GATHER EVIDENCE.

5. ICELANDIC TELEVISION EVENING SEPTEMBER 23RD PROJECTED FILMS TAKEN FROM COAST GUARD AIRCRAFT WHICH REPORTEDLY SHOWED THAT BRITISH FRIGATE TRAVELLING AT MUCH HIGHER SPEED THAN ICELANDIC CUTTER MANEUVERED IN FRONT OF IT CAUSING COLLISION TO OCCUR. IT IS ANTICIPATED THAT "EVIDENCE" SUCH AS THIS WILL PROBABLY WEIGH HEAVILY IN MARITIME COURT'S FINDINGS.  
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